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SENSITIVE  
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TAGS: KTIA MARR NATO PARM PREL AL HR GR  
SUBJECT: GREECE/NATO: PARLIAMENT RATIFIES CROATIA AND  
ALBANIAN NATO ACCESSION - REMAINING BUREAUCRATIC STEPS

REF: A. HOVENIER/EUR-RPM E-MAIL OF 2/20/09  
1B. ATHENS 147 (AND PREVIOUS)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED -- PROTECT ACCORDINGLY

1. (SBU) On February 17, the Greek Parliament formally ratified the protocols of accession of Albania and Croatia to join NATO. Although Parliamentary approval is the last political step, the protocols must still be signed by the President of the Republic and published in the "Official Gazette." The official date of ratification will be the date it is published in the "Official Gazette." This has not yet occurred.

2 (SBU) Pol-Mil Chief raised with the diplomatic advisor to the President, Theodoros Passas, and with the Deputy Director of the MFA NATO Directorate, Theodoros Daskarolis, the need to accelerate the process of obtaining the President's signature and publication in the "Official Gazette." Passas reported that the President had the protocols and would sign them "within the next few days." Daskarolis reported that Foreign Minister Bakoyannis had instructed her staff to ensure that the Parliament's ratification of the two accession protocols was published in the "Official Gazette" as soon as possible. Daskarolis said the MFA had made arrangements with the "Official Gazette" to do so "within the next two or three weeks." Daskarolis confirmed that he MFA has the formal instruments of ratification ready to be transmitted to Washington as soon as the two protocols are published in the "Official Gazette," and he said the MFA was certain the formal Greek deposit of instruments of ratification would take place "by mid-March at the latest," and "well before the NATO Summit." Embassy Athens will continue to press for rapid conclusion of this process and report once the Parliament's ratification of the two protocols has been published in the "Official Gazette."

SPECKHARD